

REMARKS
UPON A LATE
DISSERTATION

ON THE

Instituted FORM of *Baptism,*

Which chiefly refer to

Mr. Watts's DISSERTATIONS.

In a LETTER *to the* AUTHOR.



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A
L E T T E R
To the AUTHOR of the
D I S S E R T A T I O N
O N T H E
Instituted FORM of Baptism.

Reverend Sir;

BY the very little Notice the World seems to take of your late *Dissertation* on the *Form of Baptism*, I may expect to be the only Person you will ever receive any Trouble from upon this Occasion. Permit me, then, to send you some Remarks I have made, which chiefly refer to Mr. *Watts's* *Explication* of the *Doctrine* of the *Blessed Trinity*, for in the *Doctrine* it self you both agree.

I can truly say, my great Esteem, and sincere Friendship for Mr. W——, the high Value I have
A 2 for

for the *many useful Books he has published, and his other Labours, wherein he has much served the Church of God*, are such Engagements upon me, that I can no longer be a silent Observer of the unkind Attempts, which are made to prejudice the Minds of weak People against that excellent Man; though his Reputation, I own, is too well established to need my Service. The World has done him Justice, and paid uncommon Respect to his Name, which will live in many Editions, after his Adversaries are forgotten. This, perhaps, may be most *grievous and offensive* to some *Ministers and private Christians*.

Methinks, Sir, the great Esteem and sincere Friendship you profess for Mr. *W* —, should, at least, have brought you to a free Conference with him, about his late Discourses, before you had published to the World what was so directly designed to represent him, as fallen into great Errors in Matters so sacred and important. Yet it is impossible for me to suppose, you have allow'd him this civil part of a Friend, because it must have saved you the Labour of almost Twenty Pages of your Treatise, and spared you the Pains of tempting your Reader into a Notion, of a vast Difference between you and Mr. *W* — in this sacred Doctrine. But is it not very surprizing, how you could mistake him so much, if you had any Ideas of your own? I ask,

Do you believe God to be One Conscious Mind, One Infinite Spirit, with one Understanding and Will? So doth Mr. *W* —.

Do you believe this God to be called the Father, on account of his Relation to Christ, as well as to Creatures? So doth Mr. *W* —.

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Do you think the Divine Word, and the Divine Spirit, to be truly and properly God, to be essential to Deity, and yet to be as distinct from the Father, and from each other, as is possible in one and the same individual or numerical Essence? So doth Mr. *W*——.

Do you think the Word and the Spirit to be represented in Scripture, sometimes under personal Characters? So doth Mr. *W*——.

Do you suppose the Word *Person* is then used in a Sense different from that wherein 'tis used in the common Language of Men? This you profess often: So doth Mr. *W*——.

Do you think the Sense of this Word, in Divine Things, is analogical, or bears some Resemblance to the human Sense of it? Mr. *W*—— doth the same.

Wherein do you differ then?

Why truly, Mr. *Watts* supposes, there is some Analogy, which Scripture has introduced between the Idea of God, and that of a human Soul, whereby these sacred Things of our Religion may be understood: He supposes, that the Divine Word which is described as Wisdom, and the Divine Spirit which is described as an efficient Power in Scripture, do bear some Analogy to the perceptive Principle in Man, *i. e.* the Understanding; and to the operative Principle in Man, *i. e.* the Will; and hereby he secures this sublime Doctrine of Revelation from the Charges of unintelligible Cant, of Nonsense, Absurdity and Inconsistency;

siftency ; whereas you think it better, to leave the Doctrine under all this heavy Charge of the Adversaries, *and clear off nothing* of it, lest you *should gratify their insolent Unbelief*. He would fain set the Doctrine of Scripture in such an easy Light, as might not only preclude their Cavils against it, but lead them into a Belief of it ; whereas you run into the Shades of inscrutable and impenetrable Darkness, and hide your self there, lest every Gleam of Light, that may be introduced into this Doctrine, should be so far a Departure from the Mystery and Truth of the Gospel.

Your *Preface* tells the Reader, that *Mr. W——* has delivered some Things that have been very grievous and offensive to many Ministers, and private Christians. I am well acquainted with several of those Persons, to whom his Book has been so grievous and offensive ; but at the same time, they have freely declared that they have never read it, nor would they give themselves the Trouble to read it, because they had heard some Ministers speak so much against it. I would be glad to be assured, *Sir*, that you have not been amongst the Number of those, who have taught others to grieve and be offended at a Book which they never read, nor would read. There is particularly one Minister who was grievously offended with it before he ever saw it ; but since his Perusal of it, he has express'd his Wonder why *Mr. Watts's* late Dissertations should give so much Offence, since he takes them to be sufficiently Orthodox, though they differ a little from the common Modes of Expression. And I am perswaded, that if any intelligent Persons would read over this Book without Prejudice, it would at least abate some Part of their Grief and Offence.

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The first Thing I observe in your Discourse is in p. 2d. *There is little Reason to expect, that the Difficulties objected against the Catholick Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity should be removed by any human Explications, whereby Men would endeavour to accommodate this sublime Mystery to the Capacity of Human Reason: And in the next Words you discourage all Attempts to give a rational Account of it. The only Reply I shall make to this is, that I am very sorry for it: For though I am sensible, God may require us to believe some Things which he does not plainly make out to our Reason, yet it would be a great Happiness to Christianity to have a distinct and rational Account of this sublime Doctrine of the Trinity; for this would silence the Cavils of the Adversaries, who charge us with believing irrational and inconsistent Opinions; and it would very much tend to reconcile the long Contests in the Christian World, which have risen from the Difficulties that attend that Doctrine.*

Page 3d. You say, *The most unexceptionable and effectual Method of asserting and establishing the Truth is to take the Doctrine from the Holy Scriptures themselves, according to the plain Sense and Evidence of them; for 'tis not the bare Words themselves, but the Sense of these Words that is the Doctrine we are to believe.* Since then you frequently tell us, Sir, that the Scripture declares there are three Persons in the Godhead, p. 61. and other Places, I wish you would have also told us, what is the Sense of this Word *Persons*, that we might not believe bare Words: But this you always avoid; and when you put the Question your self, p. 74. the only Answer you give, is, *That the Notion of a Divine Person is the inscrutable Mystery of the ever Blessed Trinity.*

ty. Therefore we are yet at a Loss what is the Sense of these Words, *Three Persons in the Godhead*, and consequently are at a Loss what is the Doctrine we are to believe.

Page 4. l. ult. You say, *It is a meer Collusion to talk of a derived God*: Therefore I suppose you will not allow the Son, considered in his Divine Nature, to be derived from the *Father*. I must confess so far as I understand this Doctrine, I agree with you, and dislike the Notion of a *derived God*; yet I fear that herein we both run counter to the Doctrine which has generally been reckon'd *Orthodox*, as well as to the Sentiments of the ancient *Athanasians*, who declare the Son to *derive all that he is and has from the Father*: And in this Point you and Mr. *W*— are better agreed than sometimes you would make the World believe.

Page 12. You say, that we know that the principal Design of the Gospel is to give a right and true Account of the Person of Christ. Now 'tis a strange Thing, that you should represent the Notion of a Divine Person, p. 74. as an *inscrutable Mystery*, and never so much as give any Account what it is, if it be the principal Design of the Gospel to give a right and true Account of the Person of Christ. Have you not yet been able to learn in all your reading of the Gospel, that which is the chief Design of the Gospel to reveal and teach?

Page 15. You assert, *We are taught in the Revelation, to know and believe the Oeconomy of Salvation, wherein all the three Persons are concerned, according to their mutual Agreement, each of them taking their part, yet all act with one Will and Design, because they are One in Nature. Though the Actions of the one do essentially be-*

belong to the other, yet Oeconomically, they are appropriated to one or other of the Persons in the Godhead. When you say, They act with one Will and Design, because they are one in Nature, I suppose you mean, according to the common Doctrine which has been counted Orthodox by all the Reformed Churches, that they act by one Numerical Will, or Volition and Intention, because the sacred Three are but one numerical infinite Spirit, and consequently have but one numerical Understanding, and one Will; and in this Sense the Actions of the one do essentially belong to the other, though they are Oeconomically appropriated to different Persons. Thence will it not follow, that the Action of assuming Human Nature does essentially belong to the Father, and to the Spirit, as well as to the Son, yet oeconomically it is appropriated to the Son? Now, Sir, when you have clearly solved this Difficulty, and freed it from the Error of the Patripassians of old, I will shew you also how to free Mr. W—'s Scheme from the same Difficulty which you charge it with, p. 77. toward the End.

Page 27. You say, The plain Way of dealing with such Men, (viz.) the Arians, whilst we establish the true Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, is to fix the proper Sense of Religious Worship, and to strip it of every doubtful equivocal Meaning that Men would put upon it, that we may not contend about Words only. I am much of your Mind, Sir, and that not only with regard to the Term Religious Worship, which is your Theme in this Place, but I could wish you would have taken the same Care of every controverted or doubtful Term in your Discourse. I should have been much more instructed by this Dissertation, if you had been pleased to fix the proper Sense of a Divine Person, and to strip it of every doubtful equivocal

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Meaning;

Meaning, that we may not contend about Words only; but this you always avoid; and p. 74. you seem to declare it impossible. Though the last half of your Book is a Disputation to shew, that you do believe, and that Mr. W— does not believe Three Divine Persons; yet you declare you cannot tell what a Divine Person is, which Term as much needs to have its proper Sense fixed, as the Term Religious Worship.

Page 28. When you settle the Definition of Religious Worship, you make it to be, The Acknowledgment of necessary Existence, and infinite Perfections in the Object to whom this supreme Respect is given, &c. Now if all Religious Worship signify the Acknowledgment of infinite Perfections in the Object, how can you say, that the Papists pay Religious Worship to their Saints and Angels? Or, That the Heathens paid Religious Worship to Mars, Bacchus, Apollo, the Sun, Moon, and Stars, or any of their Gods besides Jupiter; since you your self own, p. 41. l. 30. That the Heathens did not give supreme Worship to them, for that they could not be so weak as to imagine, there were more than one Supreme? So, according to your Definition, they gave no Religious Worship to them; and how then can they be charged with Idolatry?

*I desire you to observe, Sir, that I don't here deny your Definition of Religious Worship: All that I remark is, that there is a greater Difficulty in determining what is Religious Worship, than at first Sight appears to those who have not studied this Controversy. And the Arians will be ready to charge upon you, what you charge upon them, p. 26. that here is a Petitio Principii, and a plain begging the Question, when you prove the Son
and*

and Holy Spirit are the true and proper God, because Religious Worship is given them in Scripture ; when at the same Time, you define Religious Worship, as including true and proper Godhead in the Object of it, which the Arians will not allow.

I know Dr. *Waterland* has argued, perhaps, as well as possible, for the Support of this Sort of Definition of *Religious Worship*: And I think he has well vindicated the sole Right of the supreme God to all Religious Worship. If you had transcribed him more at large, your Argument had been clearer and stronger; though still I think it may be owned, there is some little Room for an *Arian* to doubt and cavil upon this Head, which I should be very glad to see perfectly cleared upon the Foot of this Definition.

Page 34. I am very glad you do Mr. *W——* the Honour, to approve of his Reasons for the perpetual Obligation of the first Command, and you judge, they are *most solid and invincible*: But you are *greatly at a Loss to account for a Concession* which he makes afterwards. When he had been shewing against the *Arians*, that God had precluded all Religious Worship from being given to Creatures; he adds in a kind of Parenthesis, *I will not say, This is absolutely precluded in the Nature of Things*; which you call a *very strange Concession*, and make a great Exclamation at it: To which give me Leave to reply, that I am very sorry that all the Satisfaction you express to have received from Mr. *W——*'s six Reasons on this Subject, should not have made you a little more favourable to one single *parenthetical Line*, but you must make such *Exclamations* at it. I am sure he will freely part with that Line to please you, and give you Leave

to blot it out. Yet I think I can make it appear, that it does not deserve any Censure, if you consider the Things following.

1. The Expression, *I will not say, &c.* necessarily signifies no more than, that I will not enter into this Argument at present; but the Silence on this Head does not include any Allowance, that Religious Worship may be given to Creatures, in the Nature of Things.

2. In arguing with the *Author of the Sober Appeal*, Mr. W—— found he would not allow, that the Definition of *Religious Worship* includes an Acknowledgment of infinite Perfections in the Object; but rais'd Cavils against it, which Cavils he was willing to avoid; therefore he accepted of his own Definition, and argued with him, *ad hominem*, or upon his own Principles. Now the Appeal calls *Religious Worship*, any Honour or Homage more than human, given to any Being, on Account of some supposed Excellencies or Powers, more than human; and according to this Definition, Mr. W—— might reasonably allow, that such *Religious Worship* is not absolutely precluded, in the abstracted Nature of Things, from being given to an exalted Creature, though God has in his Word actually challenged and claimed it for himself.

I suppose now, Sir, you see that the Concession, which seems so strange to you, might be justly made in the Argument it was to serve; tho' it cannot be made on the Foot of your Definition, which a little Attention would have shown you before.

You

You add further, p. 35. That *this Concession seems to contradict the Reason assign'd to prove, that the first Command is not repeal'd*, (viz.) That God is the same one God, the one *Jehovah*, the *Eternal*, the *Almighty*, or *All-sufficient*, under the New Testament, that he was under the Old; that he is as *jealous of his own Honour*, as *sovereign a Lord*, and as *all-sufficient for the Help of his People*, &c. and on all these Accounts, he has a Right to determine who shall be worshipped, and confine it to himself. Now while you keep Mr. W——'s Definition of *Religious Worship* in view, I ask, Might not God declare, both under the Old Testament, and under the New, that he would have all *Honour and Homage that is superior to human*, paid only to himself, because he is the *one God*, he is the *Eternal*, and the *Almighty*, he is *jealous of his own Honour*, and therefore would not permit any Thing like it to be given to a Creature, lest by Degrees, Men should worship that Creature with the Neglect of God, or pay more Homage to such a Creature than was due; and therefore he would permit no meer Creature to have any *Religious Worship* paid to it, *i. e.* no *Homage superior to human*?

I add also, that when he makes his own *Godhead* and *All-sufficiency* the Reason of his confining Religious Worship to himself, 'tis because he is not only *All-sufficient for the Happiness of his People*, but that in an immediate Manner he interests himself in their Government and Happiness, and upon this Account he has excluded the Payment of any Homage, superior to human, from being given to any but himself, in the Old Testament, and in the New. And yet all this will not certainly prove, that in the abstracted Nature of Things,

Things, it could not be in the *Power and Prerogative of God*, to appoint such *Religious Worship* as this, to an exalted Creature, supposing that God made this Creature a Medium of all Transactions between himself and Man. But while God has precluded it, this is an Argument sufficient against paying it to a Creature.

I proceed now to your *second Chapter*, where you treat of the *Personality of the Sacred Three*, and I persuade my self I shall make it appear, that the Difference between you and Mr. *W—*, is not so much as you would have the World imagine.

Page 48. You describe the Scriptural Doctrine of the Trinity thus, (*viz.*) *Three Distinct Persons or Subsistences in one Nature, every one of them having the whole Divine Essence and Perfections.* P. 49. You refuse to enter into a curious Inquiry about the Sense of the Word Person, which might, perhaps, rather perplex than inform a common Reader. You acknowledge that the Word Person, as applied to the Sacred Three, cannot import exactly the same Idea, as when we speak of human Personality. And in p. 57. you grant, that Personality, when applied to Creatures, must import a distinct conscious Mind or Being, but that it does not follow, that Divine Personality must carry in it the same Idea. P. 58. When you have cited Dr. Stillingfleet, you add, *Whence we learn* (that is, from Dr. Stillingfleet) that though Divine Personality is not the same as belongs to finite Beings, yet there is a true, real and proper Personality belonging to the Sacred Three in the same Divine Nature. And in this Chapter you complain of Mr. *W—*'s very frequently, for attributing only (an analogical, or) figurative Personality to the Word and Spirit in the God-

Godhead, and make that the Matter of your great and constant Outcry, as so *grievous and offensive a Thing to Ministers and private Christians*, as your *Preface* expresses. Upon which Passages of your's give me leave to make the following Remarks.

1. The true Reason why you refuse to enter into a curious Enquiry about the Sense of the Word Person, is not meerly, because it *might rather perplex than inform a common Reader*, but because you own it perplexes your self, when in p. 74. you are forced to say, the *Notion of a Divine Person is inscrutable or unsearchable*.

2. As our Words and Language, which we apply to Divine Things, are borrowed from Things human, so it is plain, that the human Ideas we affix to them are the first, the *proper and original* Ideas, and the true *literal* Sense of those Words. Whatsoever different Sense therefore we put upon them, in transferring them to Divine Things, it can be but an *analogical or similar* Sense, a Sense *akin* to human Sense, and which the great Dr. Wallis roundly calls, in this Controversy, a *metaphorical and figurative* Sense. And, why may we not learn from Dr. Wallis as well as from Dr. Stillingfleet? Dr. Wallis was a considerable Member of the Assembly of Divines.

3. Though Mr. W——s generally uses the Term *analogical Personality* in his *Dissertations*, yet you almost always use the Term *figurative*, whenever you represent his Sense. I will not say this is done to make it appear more heretical: And, perhaps, he is oblig'd to the extraordinary Love and Friendship you may have for him, that you do not load it with heretical Names.

4. Your own Description of the Trinity, p. 48. is this, (*viz.*) *Three distinct Persons in one Nature, every one of which have the whole Divine Nature or Perfections.* Now these can be but *analogical distinct Persons*, or *Persons in a similar Sense* to human; for Three human Persons have Three distinct Natures. And why you should quarrel with Mr. W——, for using these Words in an *analogical* or *similar Sense*, when you are constrained to do the same, is what I desire you seriously to think of.

5. If you will call that a *proper Divine Sense* of the Word *Person*, which is so very different from the *proper human Sense*, I will not quarrel with you about it, while you constantly acknowledge that it is but *analogical, similar* or *akin* to the human Sense of the Word. So a Clockmaker speaks of the *Hand*, or *Finger* of a Clock; and if he will call that a *proper Hand*, or a *proper Finger*, in the *Horological Art*, which is really but an *analogical* or *metaphorical* Term, borrowed from its similar Use to a human *Hand* or *Finger*, I will not contend with him about Words. And for the same Reason, I desire that those who use Terms in *Theology* different from their *proper human Sense*, would not accuse Mr. W—— as if he was guilty of some grievous Error, when he does the same Thing which they themselves do, *i. e.* use *human Words* in a *different divine Sense*.

6. When you openly declare, p. 74. that you know not what Notion we can have of a *Divine Person* because it is *inscrutable*, how can you tell certainly it implies any Thing more, than what Mr. W—— calls a *Divine Power*, since as you your self have cited from his Writings, and he has allowed in several Places, that he acknowledges a *Power* in the
God.

Godhead may be more distinct, and may lay stronger Foundation for *personal Ascriptions* than any Powers of a human Spirit.

Page 49. You complain of being unjustly reckon'd among the Followers of Sabellius, who hold the Father and Son, and Spirit, to be one and the same individual Being: And yet within a few Lines you maintain, That the Three, who are distinguished by personal Properties, have but one individual Divine Nature. I entreat you now to inform me, What is the real Difference between your *Doctrine* and the *Sabellian*? Or, what are those *personal Characters*, each of which added to the same whole Godhead, constitute three distinct Persons? Have you any Ideas of *Paternity*, *Filiation*, and *Procession*, which superadded to the same individual Nature can make three real, proper, distinct Persons? Is it not the self same infinite Spirit in your Scheme, which is sometimes called the *Father*, sometimes the *Son*, and sometimes the *Holy Spirit*? Is there any Thing *real* in the *Father*, which is not in the *Son*? Or is it only *relative* and *nominal*? I would be glad to arrive at some Idea of your Sentiments in this Matter, if there be any Idea belongs to them: Otherwise I shall be constrained to believe your Scheme nearer to that of *Sabellius*, than Mr. W——'s is.

Page 51. You say Mr. W——'s *Dissertations* are so involved, that it is not easy to come at the true Sense and Design of his Discourse, because some Parts of it do not seem well to agree with others. You say again, p. 56. I profess I am at a Loss how to reconcile what he says, for a real Distinction between the sacred Three, as if they were three Persons, with the other Parts of his *Dissertations*, where he pleads so much for a *figurative Personality* to be ascribed to the *Word* and *Spirit*. Now, Sir, I must beg leave to tell you, that you are the very first Person I have heard complain of

Mr. *W* ———'s Discourses as being *involved*, or of any *Difficulty* to reconcile them. And I presume it can be no Disparagement to your Understanding, to say, that you are not the best Judge I have heard speak of these Discourses; though you happen to be the first Friend, who has been at the Trouble to set them in a *distinct Light*. But the Reason of your Mistake and Confusion in this Matter, is because you suppose, that a *real Distinction* must be a *real proper Personality* too; and that where there is an *analogical* or *figurative Personality*, there can only be a *figurative Distinction*. I acknowledge the *Distinction* between the sacred Three, to be *real*; that is, not only relative or nominal; and yet the *Personality* of some of them, may be but *analogical* or *figurative*. There is a *real Distinction* between the Understanding and the Will in the Soul of Man, or between the *Percipient* and the *Volitive* Faculty; that is, 'tis not meerly a relative or nominal *Distinction*; yet when these Powers are personaliz'd, the *Personality*, which is attributed to them, is but *analogical* or *figurative*, though the *Distinction* be *true, real, and proper*. The *Distinction* between the *Head* and *Eyes, Hands* and *Feet*, is *real*, in that remarkable Discourse of St. Paul, about the several Members of the Body, 1 Cor. 12. 15. Yet the *Personality* which is attributed to them, is meerly *figurative*. Now, Sir, if you had but observed this, the whole Matter had been set in a *distinct Light* without your Labour, for there is nothing in it involved or difficult: Though (as Mr. *W* ——— has often declared) I suppose there may be some divine *Distinction* between the *Word* and the *Spirit* in the Godhead, which may give a *real Foundation* for a stronger *Personality*, than that which is ascribed by Tropes and Figures, to the Members of a human Body, or the Powers of a human Soul.

Page 60. You ask, *whether the Son and Holy Spirit, are not God in the same Sense with the Father, the whole Divine Essence belonging to all the Three?* To this Mr. W—— has answered in other Places, that the *Word* and *Spirit* are sometimes taken *adequately* for God, acting by his Word, or by his Spirit; and sometimes *inadequately*, for Divine Powers or Principles of Agency. In the first of these Senses, you will allow, that they are called God *adequately*, in the same Sense as the *Father*; and when taken *inadequately* for Divine Powers, they may be properly called *God*, according to the known Axiom of the Schools, *Quicquid est in Deo est ipse Deus*.

You your self grant in the next Lines, that the Word of God sometimes includes the *whole Divine Nature*, that is, all the sacred Three; and sometimes it denotes a *distinct Subsistence* in that infinite Nature, which you call a *Person*. Now, since in your Scheme you find it necessary to take the Word *God* in two Senses, (*viz.*) *adequately* for the whole Trinity, and *inadequately* for one Part of the Trinity, I entreat the Favour of you to grant Mr. W—— the same Privilege in his Scheme also.

Page 61. Your Words are these, (*viz.*) *That there are three proper distinct Persons in the Godhead, the Scripture asserts in the strongest Terms*. Now if any one should enquire in what Chapter and Verse the *Scripture asserts this in Terminis*, and especially in the *strongest Terms*, you would find it hard to point the Place: Though I by no means deny this Doctrine, but do verily believe it may be drawn by just Inferences from several Scriptures, that there are Three in the Godhead, who are represented under the Character of distinct Persons.

Page 62. If the *Word* and *Spirit* are divine Powers of Agency, you enquire, *Whether there may not be several Persons in the Divine Nature, as Goodness, &c.* To which I answer, That though there are many *Attributes* or *Properties* belonging to a Spirit, yet there are properly but two Powers, *Faculties*, or *natural Principles of Agency*, (viz.) the Perceptive Faculty, and the Operative Faculty, or in common Speech, the Understanding and the Will. Now in a Way of Analogy to a human Mind, we may reasonably suppose, that the two Powers, called the *Word* and the *Spirit*, include all the physical Principles of Agency, and compleat the whole Idea of Godhead; whereas *Goodness, Justice, Faithfulness, Eternity, Immensity*, are no such *natural Powers of Agency*, though they are *divine Attributes* or *Properties*. The Distinction between Powers and Properties Mr. W—— has shewn, in *Dissert. 7. §. 2.*

Page 63. You enquire, *Whether the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, are not represented alike, with regard to their Personality in Scripture?* I answer, no, by no Means: The *Father* is always represented as a distinct intelligent Agent, through the whole Bible, and as the Prime Actor in all Divine Affairs; whereas the *Word* and the *Spirit* are frequently represented as internal Principles, or Mediums of the *Father's* Agency, which does not imply a distinct personal Character: For the *Word* is the *Word of God*, and the *Spirit* is called *the Spirit of God*, i. e. distinct Powers of the Godhead. I would only note here, that you put the Term *Son*, where Mr. W—— uses the Term *Word*, for the second Person in the sacred Three.

Page 64. You object against baptizing in the Name of one divine Person and two divine Powers. But I answer, if these Powers are personaliz'd, or represented as Persons in several other Places of Scripture, then

then it is not so strange to suppose, that the Form of Baptism may be thus instituted: For since they are represented as *Persons* in other Places, there is much Reason they should be so here.

However, permit me to make this Remark, that in your Scheme of the Trinity, the *Father, Son* and *Spirit* are but one and the same infinite Mind, under the different Ideas or Names of Paternity, Filiation, and Spiration. I have no other Idea therefore of your baptizing, but as in the Name of *one divine Person, under three Relations, or Names*; or as the greatest and most orthodox Writers stile them, *three relative Properties*. I wish, Reverend Sir, you could shew me how I might attain to some further Idea of your Doctrine.

Page 68. You pronounce it *very absurd, to say, there are three that bear Record in Heaven, 1 John 5. 7. when there is but one real Person, and the other two are only figurative*. Answer, If this be absurd, it is such an Absurdity as seems to be committed by the same Apostle, in the following Verse, *There are three that bear Record on Earth, the Spirit, the Water, and the Blood*; for I presume you will confess, that the *Water* and the *Blood* are but figurative Persons.

The Example you bring of *Marcus Tullius Cicero*, to shew how absurd it would be, to call these, *Three Orators*, which are but the Names of *one Man*, agrees more exactly to your Scheme, than it does to Mr. *W*——'s; for while you allow, that the *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, are but one and the same infinite Mind or Spirit, they are only diversify'd by three *relative* or *nominal* Ideas of *Paternity, Filiation, and Spiration*, and yet you call them *three distinct Persons*; so that the Parallel seems to be more just on your side than on Mr. *W*——'s, because he supposes the *Word* and *Spirit* to be real di-

distinct Powers in the divine Nature, or something analagous thereto, as far as our present Ideas can reach; and therefore Mr. W——'s Distinction between the Father, Word and Spirit, is much greater than your's.

Page 69. You maintain, that because *the Son and Spirit are worshiped with the same Worship as the Father, in Baptism*, therefore they are *real proper Persons* as well as the Father. But I think by the same Reason you may prove, that the Goodness of God is as much a Person, as the Lord Jehovah himself, from that Text, *Hosea 3. 5. And the Children of Israel shall fear the Lord, and his Goodness, in the latter Days.*

Besides, it ought to be remembred (as Mr. W—— has often intimated) that there is not one Precept or Example of plain, direct, and express Prayer or Praise offered to the *Holy Spirit*, in all the Scripture: And perhaps, one Reason of it may be, because he is rather represented, as an essential Principle of Agency in the Godhead, than as a *proper literal Person*.

Page 73. When you had argued in several Pages against Mr. W——'s Idea of distinct Powers in the Godhead, and endeavoured to represent them as meer *Attributes*, whether he will or no, in some Places of your Dissertation; you are pleased at last, to cite out of his *sixth Dissertation*, the Guard he had given against the Mistake that might arise, (*viz.*) That though the Powers of a human Soul should not be sufficient to sustain all the personal Attributions, yet the Powers of a divine and infinite Being may be sufficient: To which you make no Answer, and I take it for granted you can make none. And indeed, Sir, if you had kept this Guard always in your Eye, and done Justice to Mr. W—— in this Respect, you had saved far the greatest Part of your *second Chap.*

Chapter, which is directed against his *Dissertations*.

Page 74. *We do according to Scripture, hold three Persons in the Godhead, though Personality is not the same in all Respects, when attributed to an infinite Being, and when asserted of finite intelligent Beings. And then, if asked what Notion can we have of a divine Person, if not taken from a distinct conscious Mind? You answer, This is the inscrutable Mystery of the ever Blessed Trinity. Here I shall not repeat the Remark I had occasion to make on this Passage before, any farther than to put you in mind, that half your Book is spent to prove the Word and Spirit are two proper divine Persons, and yet here you declare to all the World, you know not what a divine Person is, and say, It cannot be known, for it is unsearchable.*

Page 75. You bestow about half a Page on Mr. W——'s sixth Dissertation, concerning the *Logos*, and the *Jewish and Eastern* Forms of Speech, the Modes of Expression used by *Philo* and the *Targumists*, who lived much about our Saviour's Time. And you suppose that one slight Dash of your Pen will cancel all that Sort of Argument at once. But I may be very certain, that such a sudden Victory and Triumph can never be obtained in the view of the Learned World, and will be only believed among those, who are *grieved and offended at the Dissertations* which they had never read, and resolve never to read.

Page 76. You say, *The federal Transactions between the Father and the Son, about the Work of Redemption, are a clear Proof of their distinct Personality.* Here if you take the Son to signify meerly the divine Nature of *Christ*, which you grant is the same whole individual divine Nature as that of the Father,
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and the same one infinite Spirit, I would beg the Liberty to enquire of you, how this *federal Transaction* can be accounted for? What Ideas can possibly be framed of it, except in a figurative Way, according to your Scheme? For if the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Spirit*, are the very same one conscious Being, if they have the very same numerical or individual Understanding and Will; how can one propose, and another consent? One appoint, and the other agree to this Appointment, &c. any otherwise, than in a Way of Analogy to human Persons and Transactions?

Page 77. You inquire, *Was it only a Power of the Father that was incarnate, and not one who is a proper Person? Then it is properly the Father, (whose Power and Wisdom the Word is supposed to be) who is incarnate, which was the Error of the Patripassians of old.*

Here allow me to ask concerning your own Scheme, Is it not the very same individual Essence, the same numerical Godhead of the Father, which is in the Son, and which is therefore incarnate? Is it not the same Understanding, the same Will, the same one conscious Mind, which belongs to the *Father*, (but under the Idea of *Filiation*) which was made *Flesh*? Then is not the *Understanding* of the *Father* conscious of the Incarnation of this Godhead of the *Father*? And did not the Will of the Father consent to this Incarnation of the same Godhead, which is in the Father, though under the Name and Notion of Sonship? And does not this Doctrine make the *Father* to be incarnate too, *which was the Error of the Patripassians*? And is not your Opinion as guilty of this Error as Mr. W—'s?

Page 80. You cite Dr. Barrow, saying, *That Understanding, Will, Grief, Anger, Sense, and Speech, are Faculties and Operations plainly personal, or such as belong to Persons: Now these are attributed to the Holy Spirit.*

Spirit. To which I answer, But some of these, when attributed to God, are as plainly figurative or analogical to human Passions and Powers, (*viz.*) *Grief, Anger, or Speech.* Why then may we not suppose the *Personality* to be *analogical* too?

Page 82. *Is not the constant uniform Account of the Holy Spirit in Scripture, such as declares himself to be a real proper Person?* I answer, That I think not: For whoever would read all the Old Testament, and a great Part of the New, where the *Holy Spirit* is named, without Prepossession, especially if he has any Acquaintance with the *Jewish and Hebrew Manners* of Speech, would generally conceive of the *Holy Spirit*, as an internal essential Power, or Principle of Agency in the Divine Nature, if his Education had not taught him to think otherwise. And as for those Places in the New Testament, and which are comparatively but few, that describe him as another distinct Person, Mr. *W*—— has accounted for, in his fifth and sixth Dissertations.

Page 85. You prove the Spirit is a *real and proper Person*, because he has an *Understanding and Will* ascribed to him. This has been fully answered by Mr. *W*——, in his former Dissertations. But I would ask you at present, Has the Spirit the same numerical Understanding and Will, with that of the *Father* and the *Son*? Or is it another Understanding and Will? If it be another Understanding and Will, this makes another Spirit, and borders too nearly upon another God. If it be the same Understanding and Will, you and Mr. *W*—— are much agreed in this Notion, though both of you will be hard put to it, to make *three distinct proper literal Persons*.

Page 86. The Holy Spirit is said to come from the *Father and the Son*, and to be sent and given, which declare him to be a distinct Person, i. e. a proper di-

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distinct Person. But this also has been fully answered by Mr. *W—*, in his former Dissertations: And I would here inquire of you, If the *Father*, *Son* and *Spirit* have the same individual Will, how the *Father's* willing to send the *Spirit*, and the *Spirit's* willing or consenting to be sent, will prove them to be two different proper Persons? Are not both these nominal Volitions really and truly the same one numerical or individual Act, of the same individual infinite Spirit, in your Scheme? And therefore I think these distinct Transactions in the Divine Nature are represented concerning God, only *analogically*, or after the manner of Men.

Page 90. In the *Conclusion* you say, concerning the *Antitrinitarians*, That they will not cease to charge the most important Doctrines of the Gospel with Nonsense and Absurdity: And must we dance after their extravagant Conceits, or gratify their insolent Unbelief, by endeavouring to clear off what is offensive to their carnal Reason, by Schemes of Accommodation? I fear it will make the Matter a great deal worse, and we shall be found not so faithful to the Truth as we ought.

This Paragraph, Sir, I may be very certain, is not your own, because it so ill becomes that Kindness and Friendship you have express'd for Mr. *W—*, in your Preface: And as I am credibly informed that you have had the charitable Assistance of some well disposed Persons, toward this good Work, I will impute to them the hardest and the warmest Share, though I do verily believe far the greatest Part of the Performance to be your own.

But whoever is the Author of it, I am very free to make this Reply, that whether the *Antitrinitarians* will alter their Conduct or no, yet I think it is no Gratification of their Unbelief, to set the great Doctrines of the Gospel in a fair and intelligible Light, and to free them from all Appearances of Nonsense.

sense and Absurdity. I am fully perswaded that this will make the Matter a great deal better, and not worse; it will have a Tendency, in its own Nature, to remove their Unbelief, by taking the Stumbling-blocks out of the Way. And as such Attempts, in my Opinion, do considerable Service to the Truth, and render Christianity more honourable, so I am satisfy'd in this, that 'tis a Work very grateful to God, and will be well accepted by our Lord Jesus, our final Judge. St. Paul endeavoured, in several of his Sermons and Epistles, to remove the peculiar Stumbling-blocks out of the Way, both of Jews and Gentiles; and to this End he argued and reasoned with each of them upon their own Principles of Reasoning, and gratify'd them so far, as to clear off what was offensive to their carnal Reasonings, by shewing them, that the Gospel of Christ did confirm the Religion of the Light of Nature, and did even establish the Law.

Mr. Watts is not contending for Victory, Applause, nor Party. * *All he aims at* (he has expressly declared) *is to gain and give as clear and distinct Ideas as he can of the Words which the Scripture uses, that, as far as possible, in explaining the Word of God, he might secure himself and others from talking without Ideas.* And it sufficiently appears by his Prefaces to both Parts of his Dissertations, and the 239th Page of his second Part, that he was by all these Steps preparing his Way, to lay a solid Foundation, for an Answer to the Objections of one of the most considerable Opposers of the Trinitarian Doctrine, and for the Defense of that Faith in which you and he are agreed: Now while you professedly throw such Stumbling-blocks in his Way, you do what in you lies to prevent his solid Defense of the Faith of the Trinity; and yet I am inform'd, that

* Differ. 2. p. 233.

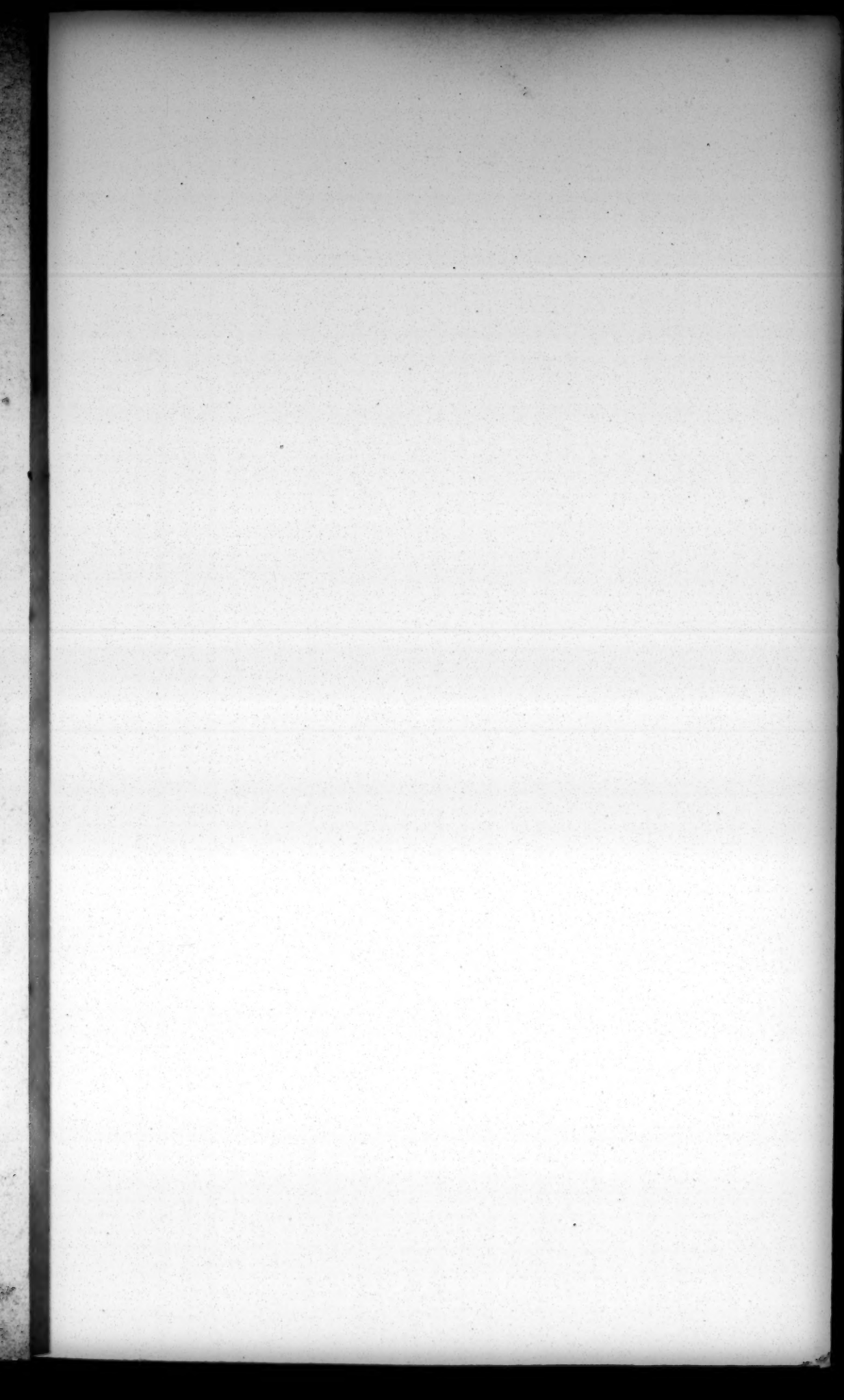
that you with some of your Friends make it the frequent Matter of your Complaint against him, that he suffers the Arian Writers to lie unanswered. I know Mr. *W*— has had an Answer to a Variety of Arian Objections, long finished, and lying by him, built chiefly on his own proposed Scheme of Explication, wherein he enlightens as well as argues all the Way; for he supposes no other Scheme, which has yet appeared in the World, is sufficient to give so fair and satisfactory a Defense of the Trinitarian Doctrine, and so effectual an Answer to all the subtil and plausible Objections of those who oppose it. But if Mr. *W*— must encounter Adversaries on both Sides, all his Way, if he must contend with the Friends of the Trinitarian Doctrine, as well as the Enemies of it, I am very apt to think he loves Peace so much, that he will choose to turn his Thoughts to other Studies, wherein he may serve the great Purposes of the Gospel of Christ, in the Advancement of Holiness and Peace, and leave Controversies to those who will subdue the Arians into the Belief of a Doctrine, by shewing them, that it can never be understood.

I am, Sir,

Your Humble Servant.



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